

F-7-27

Bell's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church
Dickerson vicinity
Private

1918-1925

Bell's Chapel M.E. Church was built between 1918 and 1925, replacing a circa 1874 log building which had served the dual purpose of church and school for the black families in the vicinity of Sugarloaf Mountain. The present structure is frame with a stone foundation and wood shiplap siding similar to that on the nearby Comstock School (F-7-25). A small bell cupola over the east end of the gable ridge has plywood panels enclosing the originally open chamber. The windows in the three-bay side elevations have 4/4 textured glass. The east elevation has a projecting foyer with double paneled doors. The church is moderately significant in religion as a late 19th century black congregation in the Sugarloaf area, where blacks had lived at least as early as the Civil War period. By the early 20th century, most of the blacks in the area were employees of Gordon Strong, whose Stronghold estate on the mountain was the principal livelihood for most people in the area. The architecture of the church is of minimal significance, resembling many late 19th and early 20th century rural churches in its plan and exterior features. Bell's Chapel was apparently named for an early nearby resident and one of the first trustees, John Beall. The spelling of the name followed the common regional pronunciation of Beall.

SEE FREDERICK COUNTY BLACK SITES SURVEY F-7-1-2 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

F-7-27

Bell's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church
Dickerson
Frederick County

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont
(Harford, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery
Counties, and Baltimore City)

Chronological/Development Period:
Industrial/Urban Dominance, A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Themes:
Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
Religion

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function & Use:
Religion/religious facility/church

Known Design Source: None

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

SEE FREDERICK COUNTY BLACK SITES SURVEY F-7-1-2 FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Bell's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church

and/or common Bell's Chapel United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 830 Mt. Ephraim Road ☐ not for publicationcity, town Dickerson ☒ vicinity of congressional district 6th

state Maryland county Frederick

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Bell's Chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church

street & number Rt. 2 telephone no.:

city, town Frederick state and zip code MD 21701

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Frederick County Courthouse liber 322

street & number 100 W. Patrick Street folio 179

city, town Frederick state MD 21701

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. F-7-27

Condition

☐ excellent

☒ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☐ original site

☐ moved

date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE COUNT: 1

Bell's Chapel is a one-story frame rural church built between 1918 and 1925 on the west side of Mt. Ephraim Road in Frederick County about one mile north of the Frederick-Montgomery County boundary and about 1-1/2 miles north of Dickerson, Montgomery County, Maryland, the nearest town. The chapel is located about 100 feet north of the Comstock School (F-7-25), built about 1910, and has the same type of wood siding as the school, a variety of shiplap with 5-inch boards with a shallow drop at the top of each board. The church has a projecting entrance foyer on the east elevation and a small bell cupola with closed-off openings. The chapel is a United Methodist church with a predominantly black congregation. A small cemetery is located west of the church. The earlier date of the building is recorded in an inscribed stone in the foundation and the completion date of 1925 was reported by Mr. Paul Wilson, a long-time resident of the area and a church member.

The chapel has three bays on the north and south elevations with high, 4/4 windows with textured glass. The projecting foyer on the east gable end has double doors with five panels. A sign panel above the door gives the name Bell's Chapel United Methodist Church. The dated stone in the foundation reads Bell's Chapel M. E. (Methodist Episcopal) Church, July 23, 1918. According to Mr. Wilson, the foundation was laid in 1918, but money to complete the chapel was not acquired until 1925, when it was finished. The shiplap siding similar to that on the Comstock School suggests that Gordon Strong may have contributed materials and/or money to complete the church. The roof is currently covered with composition siding and an interior brick chimney rises on the south side of the building. The bell cupola over the east end of the gable ridge has a hipped roof, but the originally open bell chamber is closed off with plywood panels. The interior of the church was inaccessible for this survey.

8. Significance

Survey No. F-7-27

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates C. 1918

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Bell's Chapel is moderately significant in religion as a rural black congregation in the Sugarloaf Mountain vicinity which was established about 1874 with a small log chapel on or near the site of the present building, which replaced it by 1925. The original trustees of the church included John Beall, who had a house near the site according to the 1873 Titus Atlas map. The spelling of Bell became more common, as it matched the spoken sound of the name Beall. Blacks had lived in the vicinity of Sugarloaf since at least the Civil War period and by the early 20th century, during the period of Gordon Strong's establishment of his estate, Stronghold, on the mountain, many of the residents were working for Strong on various jobs. Black children in the neighborhood attended school in Bell's Chapel's original building until about 1910, when, reportedly at the request of Mrs. Barbara Hallman, a black domestic employee of the Strong's, the Comstock School (F-7-25) was built nearby the church. By 1918, the log building was undoubtedly deteriorated and the foundation of a replacement church was laid. However, funds to complete the building were not available until 1925. The use of the same shiplap siding as on the Comstock School suggests that Gordon Strong may have contributed materials or money to finish the church. The architecture of Bell's Chapel is minimally significant, showing the typical features of many rural churches in the County in its three side bays, rectangular plan, projecting foyer with double paneled doors, textured glass windows, and small bell cupola.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. F-7-27

Land Records of Frederick County
Smart, Mr. Benjamin, Superintendent, Stronghold, Inc., personal interview,
Sept. 17, 1993.
Wilson, Mr. Paul A., personal interview, Sept. 24, 1993

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1 acreQuadrangle name Buckeystown, Md.-Va.Quadrangle scale 1:24000UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Approximately 1 acre centered on the church on Tax Map 110, Parcel 85

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet L. Davis, Historic Sites Surveyororganization Frederick County Planning & Zoning Dept. date September 1993street & number 12 E. Church Street telephone 696-2958city or town Frederick state MD. 21701

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DIORAMA
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

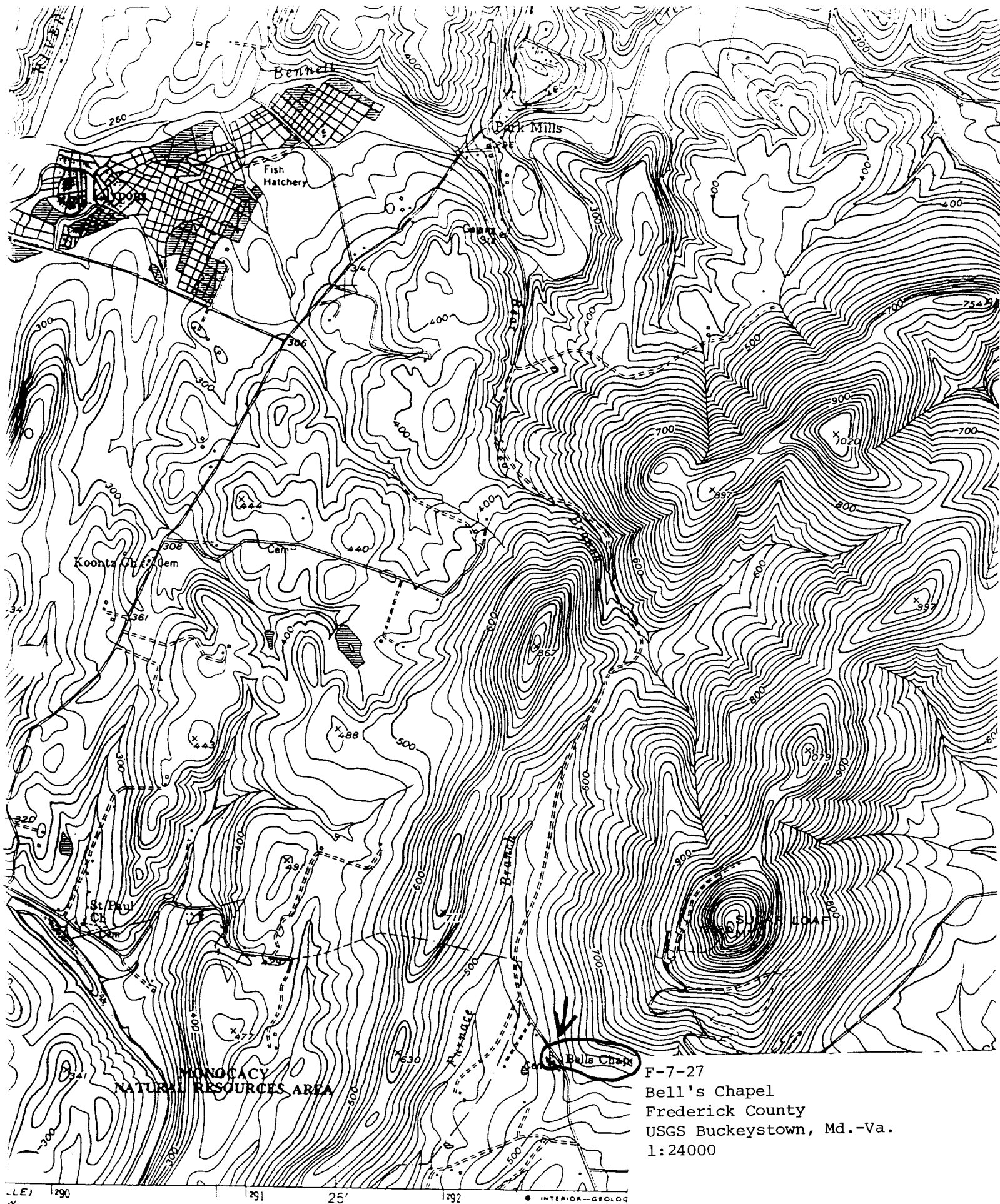
PS-2746

Lot Size, Description,
Other Information,
Original Tracts

Cost

Miscellaneous

[illegible]



F-7-27

Bell's Chapel

Frederick County

USGS Buckeystown, Md.-Va.

1:24000

4000

1 MILE

4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET





